



Disability & Healthy Relationships ECHO Summary

Date: 6/11/2026

Topic: Sexuality & Ableism

Presenters: Alexandria Acor & Raven Burton

Presentation Summary: The June 2026 ECHO meeting focused on ableism and sexuality, featuring presenters Alexandria Acor and Raven Burton from the Utah Parent Center. Raven discussed ableism's pervasive nature, its impact on individuals with disabilities, and the importance of intersectionality. Alexandria highlighted internalized ableism and the need for comprehensive sex education. They emphasized the significance of consent, autonomy, and trauma-informed care. The discussion also covered the challenges of implementing sex education in schools and the importance of community support. Participants shared personal experiences and strategies for addressing ableism and promoting inclusive sexuality education.

Community Questions & Responses:

1. Can you share how you have seen ableism first-hand between individuals or in the media?
 - ***Struggle with relationships – people with disabilities don't want to be perceived as a person with disabilities and people with and without disabilities don't always want to make relationships with those with disabilities***
 - ***Self regulation–discrimination as a person with or without disabilities.***
 - i. ***First relationships can be tough due to struggling to find healthy relationships, expectations placed on disabilities, taking advantage of disabilities.***
 - ii. ***Regular hardships in relationships with the added layer of ableism***
 - iii. ***Continue to see lots of internalized ableism among self-advocates***
 - ***Poor representation in the media.***
 - i. ***Individuals with disabilities in the media are often males which comes with its own stereotypes.***



- ii. **Can't be an accomplished woman (Simone Biles as a wife rather than accomplished athlete)**
 - iii. **Disability as an example of things could be worse or used as inspirational**
 - iv. **Love on the Spectrum having a specific niche spectrum of individuals on the show**
 - **Slow glacier pace of change, and it's hard to see if things really are changing in a positive way. Baby steps! - People with disabilities being included in the community is a new thing**
 - i. **The intellectual/developmental disability (IDD) community hasn't had the same treatment as other disabilities have had in a reframe of disability**
 - ii. **People with IDD still infantilized**
 - iii. **Use of harmful colloquialisms still prevalent - "r" word, special ed**
 - iv. **The IDD community police each other and presume lack of ability from those who are non-speaking**
 - v. **Disability perspective still in flux: these people can't do those things vs it's society's fault for not teaching people**
 - **Representation of people working in this field is more female based rather than male due to sexism**
2. How do you think ableism may show up in your field of work?
- **Removal of AAC devices**
 - **A self-advocate being "too pretty" to have IDD**
 - **Not the same opportunities for grants for the IDD community**
3. What do you think may be the most difficult thing about discussing ableism and sexuality?
- **Client has a mild ID, has a girlfriend, but they have a hard time seeing each other. His mom and sister don't want to help him within his relationship.**
 - **Religious families not allowing access sexual behaviors.**
 - i. **Intersection of religion/values and ableism can create a complex situation in addressing sexuality.**
4. What are some strategies or resources you may use to speak with different groups about ableism and sexuality?
- **Parents/Caregivers?**



- i. Sharing resources and education.***
- ii. Calming the parents' stress to see the self-advocate's behaviors may not be such a problem.***
- iii. Relaying it back to what we expect from typical adults.***
- iv. Abuse prevention conversations.***
- v. Storytelling examples of positive outcomes.***
- vi. Culture plays a large role in advancing ideas around unsafe sexual behaviors.***

- Healthcare providers?*
- People with disabilities?*

5. What is one thing you plan on doing moving forward after listening to this presentation?*

*We ran out of time to talk about all of the Community Questions in this session. Have anything to add? We would love to hear from you! Please send your responses to **mindy.dokos@usu.edu!**